

## Message Text

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C O N F I D E N T I A L MADRID 1999

FOR EUR LABOR ADVISOR GOOT

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: ELAB, PINT, SP

SUBJECT: CALL ON SSO SECRETARY GENERAL SOCIA

1. DURING MARCH 10 CALL BY DCM AND LABOR ATTACHE  
ON JOSE MARIA SOCIAS HUMBERT, NEWLY DESIGNATED SECRETARY  
GENERAL (NUMBER 2 MAN) AN DONE OF THE MOST LIBERAL YOUNG  
LEADERS IN GOVERNMENT CONTROLLED SPANISH SYNDICAL ORGANIZATION (SSO)  
SOCIA COMMENTED ON SSO REFORM, THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE RECENT  
VITORIA DISORDERS AND OTHER STIKES.  
AND ON THE DESIRABILITY OF CONTACT WITH THE AFL-CIO.

2. VIEWS ON SSO REFORM-SOCIA ELABORATED ON THE IDEAS  
WHICH HE AND HIS CHIEF, NEW SYNDICAL MINISTER MARTIN  
VILLA, HAVE FOR REFORMING THE SSO. THE OVERALL OBJECTIVE  
WOULD BE ACHIEVEMENT OF FREE, TRULY REPRESENTATIVE,  
UNIONS NOT DOMINATED BY ANY ONE GROUP. THE REFORMIDEAS  
INCLUDED: A) COMPLETE SEPARATION OF SSO WORKER FROM  
EMPLOYER ORGANISMS, AND EVENTUAL REMOVAL OF THE LATTER  
ALTOGETHER FROM THE SSO: B) SUBSTANTIAL SEPARATION OF  
SSO FROM THE GOVT: C) THE ESTABLISHMENT OF FULL REPRESENTATIVITY  
AND DEMOCRACY WITHIN THE SSO. AND D)

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THE MAINTENANCE OF A UNITARY TOP SSO STRUCTURE BUT

WITH THE POSSIBILITY INDEED INEVITABILITY OF PURALISM  
AT THE SSO BASE.

3. PLANS FOR A SYNDICAL CONGRESS. THESE AND OTHER SSO REFORMS WOULD BE VOTED ON AT A SSO SYNDICAL CONGRESS, WHICH SOCIA'S ESTIMATED WOULD BE HELD IN JULY, THIS SYNDICAL CONGRESS WOULD BE MUCH MORE DEMOCRATIC AND REPRESENTATIVE THAN PREVIOUS SSO CONGRESSES, AND HE CITED PLANS TO EXPAND TO APPROXIMATELY 2,500 THE NUMBER OF SSO DELEGATE WHOUL WOULD ATTEND THE CONGRESS (AT THE LAST SSO SYNDICAL CONGRESS, IN 1973, THERE WERE ONLY 600 DELEGATES). PRIOR TO THE CONGRESS, A POLL WOULD BE CONDUCTED OF SPAIN'S 360,000 SHOP STEWARDS TO DETERMINE THEIR VIEWS ON WHAT TYPES OF SYNDICAL DESIRE, AND THE POLL RESULTS WOULD HELP GUIDE THE WORK OF THE CONGRESS. ADDITIONALLY, SOCIA'S SAID THE SSO HAS RECENTLY SET UP SEVERAL COMMITTEES TO STUDY AND COME UP WITH RECOMMENDATIONS ON SUCH THINGS AS THE ESTABLISHMENT OF AN UNFETTERED RIGHT TO STRIKE, COMPLETE FREEDOM FOR WORKERS TO ASSEMBLE IN THE PLANT, THE RIGHT OF FREE WORKER EXPRESSION, AND THE RIGHT OF ASSOCIATION AS IT PERTAINS TO THE TRADE UNION SPHERE.

4 RECENT VITORIA DISORDERS AND OTHER STRIKES  
COMMENTING ON RECENT MARCH 3 GENERAL STRIKE IN VITORIA WHICH LED TO RIOTS AND WORKERS DEATHS (REFTEL). SOCIA'S SAID THAT THIS WAS AN EXAMPLE OF WHY TRADE UNION AND POLITICAL FREEDOMS, INCLUDING THE RIGHT TO STAGE PEACEFUL POLITICAL MANIFESTATIONS AND THE RIGHT TO STRIKE, ARE NEEDED ALMOST IMMEDIATELY. HAD SUCH FREEDOMS AS THESE ALREADY EXISTED, THESE TYPES OF DEMONSTRATIONS WOULD NOT HAVE RESULTED IN TRAGEDY. HE FURTHERMORE PUT THE BLAME IN VITORIA ON BOTH REACTIONARY LOCAL EMPLOYERS AS WELL AS SHORT SIGHTED GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS, WHO SHOULD HAVE SEEN THE LABOR PROBLEMS BUILDING UP THE MONTH PRECEDING THE RIOTS, AND SHOULD HAVE TAKEN APPROPRIATE STEPS TO LET PEOPLE DEMONSTRATE AND LET OFF STEAM BEFORE THE CLIMATE BECAME EMBITTERED. SOCIA'S SAID HE EXPECTED A CONTINUATION OF SUBSTANTIAL STRIKE ACTIVITY, BUT THIS DID NOT BOTHER HIM, AND HE WAS SOMEWHAT OPTIMISTIC THAT REPRISALS OF VIOLENT EPISODES SUCH AS AT VITORIA MIGHT BE AVOIDED, HE STRESSED, HOWEVER, THAT  
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ANY TRANSITION FROM A DICTATORSHIP TO A DEMOCRACY IS DIFFICULT AND WILL HAVE ITS UPS AND DOWNS AND PEOPLE CANNOT EXPECT IT TO BE A TRANQUIL PERIOD.

5. INQUIRY RE ALF-CIO ATTITUDE TOWARDS SSO SOCIA'S MADE THE POINT THAT HE AND MARTIN VILLA WERE UP AGAINST A DIFFICULT TASK, BOTH BECAUSE OF PRESSURES FROM ILLEGAL GROUPS ON THE LEFT, AS WELL AS FROM THE ENTRENCHED

FALANGIST AND CONSERVATIVES OF THE SSO "BUNKER" ON THE RIGHT. HE SAID THAT NOW, DURING THIS TRANSITION PERIOD TO A TRULY DEMOCRATIC TRADE UNION SYSTEM, WAS WHEN THE SSO NEEDED HELP AND FOREIGN SUPPORT MORE THAN EVER. IN THIS REGARD, HE ASKED WHAT THE ATTITUDE OF THE AFL-CIO WAS TOWARD THE EVOLVING SITUATION IN SPAIN, AND WHETHER THERE WAS NOT SOME WAY THAT THE AFL CIO COULD HELP MAKE SSO'S DEMOCRATIZATION PROCESS EASIER. HE ALLEGED OTHER (UNSPECIFIED) FOREIGN LABOR GROUPS WERE ALREADY INVOLVED. THE AFL CIO SHOULD BE ALSO. AFTER A BRIEF EXPLANATION OF THE AFL CIO'S POSITION TOWARDS SPAIN, SOCIA WAS ASKED WHAT HE HAD IN MIND WHEN HE REFERRED TO AFL CIO HELP. COCIAS DID NOT HAVE ANY SPECIFIC SUGGESTIONS IN THIS REGARD, BUT SAID THAT SOME FORM OF INITIAL CONTACTS, EVEN DISCREET, CONFIDENTIAL ONES, COULD PERHAPS BE ESTABLISHED WITH THE AFL CIO, AND THAT SUCH POSSIBLE CONTACT COULD BE VERY USEFUL TO THE SSO IN IT DEMOCRATIZATION PLANS NOW AND

IS THE FUTURE. HE STRESSED THIS POINT, AND ASKED THAT HE BE GIVEN A CURRENT READING OF THE AFL CIO ATTITUDE.

6. COMMENT: BOTH SYNDICAL MINISTER MARTIN VILLA AND HIS DEPUTY SOCIA, ARE ENERGETIC YOUNG LIBERALIZERS WHOSE IDEAS AND EFFORTS ARE STILL IN A FORMATIVE STAGE. DESPITE FACT ONE CANNOT PREDICT HOW THEIR IDEAS AND EFFORTS WILL COME OUT, OR EVEN WHETHER THEY WILL BE PARTIALLY OR WHOLLY SUCCESSFUL WE BELIEVE THAT NOW MAY BE THE TIME FOR THE AFL CIO TO RECONSIDER ITS ATTITUDE AND EXPLORE THE DESIRABILITY OF ESTABLISHING SOME FORM OF INFORMAL INITIAL CONTACTS WITH THE SSO. THERE WILL BE FEW TIMES AS EFFECTIVE INFLUENCE IN THE FUTURE LABOR STRUCTURE IN SPAIN THROUGH SUCH CONTACTS WITH THE SSO THAN THE CURRENT EARLY TRANSITION PERIOD.  
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